



**R. Booth Goodwin II, United States Attorney  
Southern District of West Virginia**

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CONTACT: Melvin Smith  
800-659-8726\*(304)345-2200  
Melvin.Smith@usdoj.gov

**SOUTH CHARLESTON MAN SENTENCED TO 19 YEARS IN PRISON ON FEDERAL DRUG AND GUN CHARGES**

CHARLESTON, W. Va. –Dana Nida, 48, of South Charleston, West Virginia was sentenced to 19 years in prison today by United States District Judge John T. Copenhaver Jr., on federal drug and gun charges. After a three-day trial in November 2010, a jury sitting in Charleston convicted Nida on several drug and gun charges. Nida was found guilty of conspiracy to distribute cocaine and cocaine base, possessing a firearm in furtherance of a drug trafficking crime, distribution of cocaine base, possession with intent to distribute cocaine and of being a felon in possession of a firearm. Nida was prohibited from possessing a firearm by virtue of two previous felony convictions.

The convictions stem from an investigation conducted by the Metropolitan Drug Enforcement Network Team (MDENT). Evidence at the November trial revealed that an investigation into Nida's drug activities ensued on May 27, 2009, following a tip that he was supplying local prostitutes with drugs from his apartment in South Charleston. Agents testified that following the tip, a surveillance detail was established around the apartment. Agents observed a woman leaving the residence and return to a truck occupied by several individuals. Two detectives followed the truck until it pulled onto a nearby parking lot. Crack cocaine was recovered from the driver. The woman admitted to agents that she had just purchased the crack from Nida for \$100.

Nida was arrested for distributing cocaine base and his apartment was secured for a search warrant. The search yielded a loaded semi-automatic pistol which task force agents later learned had been reported stolen by the Nitro police chief on March 30, 2009. The search also yielded five individually packaged baggies containing powder cocaine and digital scales. Agents also discovered an elaborate video surveillance system comprising of two television sets that displayed live images of the front of Nida's apartment. The images were captured by two video cameras that were attached to the side of the house located adjacent to Nida's apartment.

Nida maintained he simply used cocaine and cocaine base for his personal use and that he supplied it to prostitutes to party with at his apartment. However, at trial, three prostitutes testified that they sold quantities of cocaine base between approximately March 2009 and May 2009 at Nida's direction.

Assistant United States Attorney Charles T. Miller handled the prosecution.

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